

Message Text

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ACTION A-01

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BRASILIA 2042

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OREP, PFOR, SHUM, ENRG, BR
SUBJECT: HIGHLIGHTS OF VISIT TO BRASILIA OF SENATOR CHARLES
MATHIAS

1. SUMMARY: WHILE IN BRASILIA MARCH 7-8 SENATOR CHARLES MATHIAS CALLED ON OR LUNCHEDED WITH SIX BRAZILIAN CABINET MINISTERS. HE ALSO MET THREE TOP LEADERS OF THE BRAZILIAN SENATE AND HAD INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS WITH TOP BRAZILIAN PRESS ANALYSTS AND ACADEMICIANS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF BRASILIA. IN HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH BRAZILIAN OFFICIALS, AND IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE, THE SENATOR STRONGLY REAFFIRMED THE HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS FELT BY THE US CONGRESS, SPOKE OUT IN DEFENSE OF NON-PROLIFERATION AND INTERNATIONAL CONTROL OVER SENSITIVE NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY, AND STRESSED US SYMPATHY FOR BRAZIL'S ENERGY DILEMMA. DESPITE BILATERAL STRAINS IN THE WAKE OF BRAZIL'S RENUNCIATION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE, THE SENATOR WAS CORDIALLY RECEIVED BY SENIOR BRAZILIAN OFFICIALS. END SUMMARY.

2. WHILE IN BRASILIA MARCH 7 AND 8, SENATOR CHARLES MATHIAS OF MARYLAND WAS BRIEFED BY THE AMBASSADOR AND OTHER SENIOR EMBASSY OFFICERS ON THE NUCLEAR ISSUES AND THE CURRENT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION. SUBSEQUENTLY
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HE MADE CALLS ON THE GOVERNOR OF THE FEDERAL DISTRICT, ELMO SEREJO FARIAS, AND ON THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (SILVEIRA), JUSTICE (FALCAO), MINES AND ENERGY (UEKI), AND INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE (CALMON DE SA). HE ALSO CALLED ON THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, PETRONIO PORTELLA, WHO WAS ACCOMPANIED DURING THE CALL BY SENATOR MAGALHAES PINTO, RECENTLY ELECTED CHAIRMAN

OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMISSION; THE MINISTER-CHIEF OF THE PLANNING SECRETARIAT, JOAO PAULO REIS VELLOSO; AND MET AT LUNCH WITH FINANCE MINISTER MARIO HENRIQUE SIMONSEN, WHOM THE SENATOR HAD KNOWN PREVIOUSLY.

3. SENATOR MATHIAS WAS GUEST OF HONOR AT A DINNER GIVEN BY AMBASSADOR CRIMMINS THE EVENING OF MARCH 7, ATTENDED BY GUESTS FROM THE SENATE, SUPREME COURT, FOREIGN MINISTRY AND UNIVERSITY OF BRASILIA. THE SENATOR MET AT LUNCH ON MARCH 8 WITH TOP-LEVEL POLITICAL ANALYSTS AND OTHER IMPORTANT JOURNALISTS BASED IN BRASILIA AND WITH PROFESSORS FROM THE DEPARTMENTS OF LAW, POLITICAL SCIENCE, COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BRASILIA.

4. THE SENATOR GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE MARCH 8 AT CHANCERY AND IN AFTERNOON OF SAME DAY MET WITH MEMBERS OF EMBASSY STAFF AND DEPENDENTS FOR AN INFORMAL DISCUSSION OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE US.

5. AT THE 40-MINUTE PRESS CONFERENCE, ATTENDED PRINCIPALLY BY BRAZILIAN JOURNALISTS, BUT WITH ONE AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT PRESENT, SENATOR MATHIAS WAS QUESTIONED EXTENSIVELY ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING REQUIREMENT IN FOREIGN ASSISTANCE LEGISLATION AND ABOUT US NON-PROLIFERATION POLICY. REMINDING JOURNALISTS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THAT HE WAS SPEAKING AS MEMBER OF LEGISLATIVE BRANCH, SENATOR MATHIAS SAID THAT THE REPORT PREPARED FOR CONGRESS ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN BRAZIL, WHICH WAS A MAJOR NEWS ITEM IN BRAZIL DURING THE CONFIDENTIAL

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SENATOR'S VISIT, WAS A CONGRESSIONAL DOCUMENT AND WOULD PROBABLY BE RELEASED BY ABOUT MARCH 21. THE REPORT, WHICH HE STATED HE HAD NOT READ, WAS PREPARED IN COMPLIANCE WITH A LAW WHICH PRE-EXISTED THE PRESENT CARTER ADMINISTRATION. COMMENTING ON THE CONTROVERSY STEMMING FROM BRAZIL'S CHARGES OF US INTERFERENCE AND ITS REFUSAL OF MILITARY AID, MATHIAS NOTED THAT NO NATION IS OBLIGED TO ACCEPT AID JUST AS NO NATION IS OBLIGATED TO GIVE AID. HE ADDED THAT CONGRESS OF COURSE DOES NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER COUNTRIES, BUT IT DOES HAVE THE RIGHT TO DENY US AID TO THOSE COUNTRIES THAT CONTRAVENE THE NORMS UPHELD BY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. RESPONDING TO THE SUGGESTION OF HYPOCRISY, MATHIAS COMMENTED THAT THE US IS NOT PERFECT AND CONGRESS DOESN'T EXPECT THE NEIGHBORS OF THE US TO BE. CONGRESS, HOWEVER, WANTS TO BE CERTAIN THAT THE AID IT AUTHORIZES IS NOT USED TO SUSTAIN OR STRENGTHEN REGIMES WHOSE PRACTICES CONTRAVENE BASIC NORMS. CONGRESS, HE EXPLAINED, SEEKS INFORMATION ON THE HUMAN

RIGHTS PRACTICES OF PROSPECTIVE AID RECIPIENTS SO
IT CAN DETERMINE WHETHER THEY ARE AT LEAST MOVING ON
THE SAME ROAD AS THE US.

6. ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE REPORT, MATHIAS STATED HE
HAD NOT READ IT, BUT HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE UNDER-
STOOD THAT THE BRAZILIAN PRESS WAS FREE AND THAT HE HAD
LEARNED FROM HIS CONTACTS WITH "BRAZILIAN FRIENDS" THAT
THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN BRAZIL HAD IMPROVED.
COMMENTING ON THE DAMAGE DONE TO US-BRAZILIAN RELATIONS
BY THE HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT EPISODE, MATHIAS SAW BRAZIL-US
RELATIONS AS SO WIDE RANGING AND WITH MANY AREAS OF COMMON
INTEREST THAT THIS EPISODE WOULD NOT CAUSE IMPORTANT OR
LASTING DAMAGE. HE COMPARED THE CLOSE US-BRAZILIAN
RELATIONSHIP TO A MARRIAGE, WHICH WOULD GO ON BUT WHICH
OF COURSE WOULD EXPERIENCE OCCASIONAL QUARRELS.

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7. ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION ISSUES AND THE FRG-BRAZIL
NUCLEAR ACCORD, MATHIAS STRESSED THAT SINCE THE US SHARES
BRAZIL'S ENERGY DILEMMA IT IS SYMPATHETIC TO ITS NEEDS.
BUT HE BELIEVED IT WAS IMPORTANT TO SEPARATE CAREFULLY
THE PROBLEM OF ENERGY FROM NON-PROLIFERATION. HE
EXPRESSED HIS STRONG PERSONAL CONVICTION OF THE
IMPORTANCE OF NON-PROLIFERATION, NOTING THAT HE
PERSONALLY HAD SEEN THE ASHES OF HIROSHIMA AND
NAGASAKI. HE FAVORED A STRONG IAEA AND ULTIMATELY THE
PLACING OF ALL SENSITIVE NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY AND MATERIALS
UNDER INTERNATIONAL CONTROL. HE AGREED WITH HIS
QUESTIONERS ON THE NEED FOR SIGNIFICANT DISARMAMENT STEPS
BY THE NUCLEAR POWERS, STATING THAT BOTH THE US AND
THE USSR SHOULD, AS A GESTURE OF GOOD WILL, REDUCE THEIR
STOCKS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

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8. FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA WAS THE FIRST OF THE SERIES OF CABINET MINISTERS WHO RECEIVED SENATOR MATHIAS. DURING VISIT OF ABOUT 40 MINUTES, MATHIAS, WHO WAS ACCOMPANIED ON THIS AND OTHER CABINET CALLS BY AMBASSADOR AND AIDE ARTHUR HOUGHTON, RECEIVED STANDARD PERFORMANCE SILVEIRA NORMALLY PROVIDES DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN VISITORS. SILVEIRA, WHILE CHARACTERISTICALLY GARRULOUS, WAS SOMEWHAT STIFF, AND DEVOTED MUCH OF HIS TIME TO A REPETITION OF BRAZIL'S POSITION ON THE NUCLEAR ISSUE. SILVEIRA ALSO REFERRED TO HIS CONCERN OVER THE DANGER OF THE GROWTH OF ANTI-AMERICANISM IN BRAZIL DESPITE WHAT HE CLAIMED WAS THE GOVERNMENT DESIRE NOT TO SEE THIS OCCUR.

9. SENATOR MATHIAS' CALL ON MINISTER OF JUSTICE FALCAO WAS LARGELY NON-SUBSTANTIVE. DISCUSSING PENAL REFORM, SENATOR MATHIAS EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER RECIDIVISM AND THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF THE PRISON EXPERIENCE IN THE US. FALCAO SAW IT AS A BRAZILIAN PROBLEM AS WELL, NOTING THAT PENAL REFORM WAS A MAJOR INTEREST OF PRESIDENT GEISEL. FALCAO EXPLAINED BRIEFLY PENITENTIARY IMPROVEMENTS DURING GEISEL'S ADMINISTRATION AND THE PROPOSED NEW LEGISLATION TO MAKE CRIMINAL SENTENCES MORE REALISTIC AND HUMANE.

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10. MINISTER OF MINES AND ENERGY UEKI URGED THE SENATOR THAT THE US TAKE GREATER LEADERSHIP IN DEALING WITH THE ENERGY CRISIS, SINCE AS CONSUMER OF ONE-THIRD OF ALL IMPORTED OIL ITS POLICIES HAVE ENORMOUS WEIGHT WORLD-WIDE. UEKI VOICED CONCERN THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAD COME OUT AGAINST FURTHER GASOLINE PRICE INCREASES, NOTING HIS OWN CONVICTION THAT THE PRICE MECHANISM WAS THE ONLY APPROACH THAT HAD REALLY WORKED IN CURBING THE INCREASE OF GASOLINE CONSUMPTION IN BRAZIL. UEKI OUTLINED BRAZIL'S ENERGY SOURCES, POINTING OUT THAT THE GREATEST AREA OF HYDRO-ELECTRIC POTENTIAL--THE AMAZON--WAS FAR AWAY FROM INDUSTRIAL CENTERS. UEKI REITERATED THAT THE NUCLEAR OPTION HAD TO BE BRAZIL'S ANSWER TO THE RAPID FUTURE RISE IN ITS ENERGY NEEDS. HE OUTLINED FOR THE SENATOR BRIEFLY THE SEQUENCE OF STEPS THAT LED TO BRAZIL'S NUCLEAR AGREEMENT

WITH FRG, INCLUDING HIS OWN SECRET SEVEN-DAY NEGOTIATING VISIT TO THE FRG. HE STRESSED THE HIGH PRIORITY BRAZIL GAVE TO OBTAINING A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM, INCLUDING THE INDUSTRIAL CAPACITY TO MANUFACTURE NUCLEAR EQUIPMENT DOMESTICALLY. HE CALLED THE FRG-BRAZIL NUCLEAR ACCORD THE FIRST SUCH DEAL AND THE LAST SUCH DEAL, SINCE NO OTHER SUCH DEALS WOULD BE POSSIBLE HEREAFTER. BUT HE COMMENTED THAT THE ACCORD IS FIRM AND WILL NOT BE CHANGED.

11. REIS VELLOSO GAVE SENATOR MATHIAS HIS STANDARD BRIEFING ON THE PLANNING FUNCTION AND THE BROAD OUTLINE OF THE STRATEGY OF THE CURRENT FIVE-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN. SENATOR MATHIAS SPOKE OF THE DIFFICULTY OF GETTING THE CONCEPT OF PLANNING ACCEPTED IN THE US BECAUSE OF THE TERM'S UNFAVORABLE CONNOTATION. REIS VELLOSO STRESSED THAT THE GOB DID NOT TRY TO IMPOSE ITS PLAN ON PRIVATE ENTERPRISE, BUT USED INCENTIVES TO INDUCE PRIVATE ENTREPRENEURS TO FOLLOW NATIONAL PRIORITIES. ON PARTING, REIS VELLOSO COMMENTED TO THE SENATOR THAT THE CURRENT POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN THE US AND BRAZIL COULD ONLY HELP THE LEFT.

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12. MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE CALMON DE SA TOLD SENATOR MATHIAS THAT THE CURRENT HIGH PRICE OF COFFEE COULD NOT LAST AND WOULD PROBABLY RETURN TO NORMAL IN TWO YEARS OR LESS. SENATOR MATHIAS EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THESE ASSURANCES AND SAID HE INTENDED TO PASS THEM ON TO HIS CONSTITUENTS. CALMON DE SA EXPLAINED THAT HEAVY COFFEE TREE PLANTING IS STILL BEING CARRIED OUT, MUCH OF IT IN NEW AREAS WHERE FROSTS ARE NO DANGER. THE HEAVY YIELDS FROM THESE NEW TREES WOULD IMPACT ON FUTURE PRICES. ASKED BY THE SENATOR ABOUT THE POWER OF ORGANIZED LABOR IN BRAZIL, CALMON SAID HE WOULD REPLY WITH FRANKNESS: UNIONS ARE WEAK AND CONTROLLED BY THE GOVERNMENT; STRIKES AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ARE FORBIDDEN AND LABOR LEADERS ARE CHOSEN BY THE GOVERNMENT. UNDER THESE CONDITIONS, HE ADDED, THERE IS LITTLE INTEREST AMONG WORKERS IN THEIR UNIONS AND EMPLOYERS HAVE A RELATIVELY FREE HAND. HE CHARACTERIZED THESE POLICIES AS THE REVOLUTION'S REACTION TO THE EXCESSES OF LABOR IN THE PRE-MARCH 1964 PERIOD.

13. THE SENATOR AND HIS AIDE LUNCHEDED ALONE WITH FINANCE MINISTER SIMONSEN. SUBSEQUENTLY, THE SENATOR DESCRIBED THEIR CONVERSATION AS A WIDE-RANGING ONE "BETWEEN OLD FRIENDS." HE NOTED THAT SIMONSEN HAD DISCUSSED HIS TRIP TO IRAN IN 1976 AND HIS MEETINGS WITH THE SHAH TO ARRANGE A MAJOR BILATERAL TRADE DEAL.

14. COMMENT: NOTWITHSTANDING THE STRAINS RESULTING FROM THE NUCLEAR ISSUE AND BRAZIL'S RENUNCIATION OF US MILITARY ASSISTANCE BECAUSE OF THE ATTENDANT HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING REQUIREMENTS, THE BRAZILIANS RECEIVED THE SENATOR WITH CORDIALITY AND INTEREST, BEST DEMONSTRATED BY THE SENIOR OFFICIALS WHO WERE PLEASED TO GIVE HIM THEIR TIME. THE SENATOR'S HANDLING OF THE MEDIA WAS DEFT AND EFFECTIVE, CONTRIBUTING POSITIVELY TO THE MISSION'S EFFORTS TO PUT
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THE ORIGINS AND INTENT OF THE CONTROVERSIAL HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING REQUIREMENT IN PROPER PERSPECTIVE FOLLOWING THE ANGRY BRAZILIAN REACTION. SPEAKING TO THE PRESS AS AN EXPERIENCED LEGISLATOR, THE SENATOR WAS ABLE TO BRING HOME THE POINT--FREQUENTLY OBSCURED BY THE PRESS-- THAT THE REPORTING REQUIREMENT WAS NOT A VENDETTA BY PRESIDENT CARTER BUT A PROCESS MANDATED BY CONGRESS BEFORE CARTER BECAME PRESIDENT. THE SENATOR'S STRONG SUPPORT FOR NON-PROLIFERATION AND INTERNATIONAL CONTROLS OF SENSITIVE PROCESSES, WHILE NOT ALWAYS ACCEPTED BY HIS BRAZILIAN INTERLOCUTORS, BROUGHT HOME THE STRONG CONCERN OF US PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL OPINION ON THIS ISSUE. END COMMENT.
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